# Centre County Kepone

**Last Update:**
August 2002

**EPA Region 3**
Pennsylvania
Centre County
State College Borough

**EPA ID#** PAD000436261

**11th** Congressional District

**Other Names:**
RÜTGERS Organics
Ruetgers-Nease Chemical Company
Nease Chemical

## Current Site Status

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency is overseeing the cleanup of the Centre County Kepone Site. The cleanup is being carried out and paid for by RUTGERS Organics Corporation (ROC), a potentially responsible party (PRP). A new groundwater extraction and treatment system began operating in October 2000. The surface water drainage system for the facility has been improved, including reconstruction of a major drainage ditch. ROC also removed about 800 cubic yards of contaminated soil from the ditch and disposed of it off site. In March 2001, EPA issued an Amendment to the April 1995 Record of Decision. The Amendment provides an improved cleanup approach for contaminated soils. An enhanced soil vapor extraction (SVE) system will be used to clean up volatile organic compounds (VOCs) from subsurface soils. Excavation and off-site disposal will continue to be used for soil contaminated with pesticides. ROC conducted

additional soil excavation in Fall 2001 is also proceeding with design of the enhanced SVE system in accordance with the amendment.

## Site Description

The 32-acre Centre County Kepone site, located in State College, Pennsylvania, is an active chemical manufacturing plant that produced the pesticide kepone in 1958, 1959 and 1963, and the pesticide mirex in 1973 and 1974. Process wastes originally were disposed of on site in a spray irrigation field, a concrete lagoon, and two other earthen lagoons. Process wastes also were stored in drums on-site. After leaks were discovered, the material in the lagoons was solidified and disposed of in the two earthen lagoons and capped. However, the material failed to solidify, and hazardous materials leached into the groundwater and surface water. Spring Creek is located adjacent to the Site and in 1982, a section of the creek was designated as a catch and release zone for fishing as a result of high levels of pesticides in fish. Fish tissue levels have declined and the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania determined that the catch and release regulation was no longer required for contamination reasons in 2001. Approximately 2,100 people live within a one-mile radius of the site. The closest residence is less than a quarter mile from the site.

**Site Responsibility**

Cleanup of this site is the responsibility of the Federal government and parties' potentially responsible for site contamination.

**NPL Listing History**

Our country's most serious, uncontrolled, or abandoned hazardous waste sites can be cleaned using federal money. To be eligible for federal cleanup money, a site must be put on the National Priorities List (NPL). This site was proposed to the NPL on December 30, 1982 and formally added to the list September 8, 1983.

## Threats and Contaminants

Various volatile organic compounds (VOCs), which are chemical components of solvents, and the pesticides kepone and mirex have

been detected in on-site soil and in on-site and off-site groundwater, sediments, and surface water. Polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs), by-products of petroleum products, have been detected in on-site sediments and soils. Current threats to human health are associated with the use of contaminated ground water.

Contaminant descriptions and associated risk factors are available on the Agency for Toxic Substance and Disease Registry, an arm of the CDC, web site at http://www.atsdr.cdc.gov/hazdat.html EXIT disclaimer

## Cleanup Progress

In 1982, Ruetgers-Nease, a party potentially responsible for site contamination, completed limited cleanup measures under orders from the state, by excavating and removing contaminated material from lagoons, removing drums, excavating surface soil from the drum storage area, and disposal of the waste material in a landfill. Ruetgers-Nease also started a groundwater recovery and treatment program.

In April 1995, EPA signed a record of decision for a more comprehensive cleanup of the site. The selected cleanup methods included extraction and treatment of contaminated groundwater; excavation and off-site disposal of contaminated soils and sediments; surface water system improvements; additional soil/sediment sampling; monitoring of ground water, surface water, stream sediments, and fish tissue; on-site and off-site fencing; and deed restrictions.

A consent decree was signed by Ruetgers-Nease Corporation in September 1996, that requires the company to perform the cleanup outlined in the record of decision. Occidental Chemical Corporation, another PRP for the site, had declined participation in the cleanup. In March 1997, EPA issued an order to Occidental Chemical Corporation for the remedial design and remedial action.

In November 2001, EPA approved the Interim Remedial Action Report which established the following construction activities required by the ROD have been completed: 1) Installation of new groundwater extraction wells and conveyance system, 2) demolition and installation of a new groundwater treatment plant system, 3) excavation and

reconstruction of an existing drainage ditch, 4) upgrades to surface water management controls, and 5) fencing at Thornton Spring. Operation and maintenance of the groundwater extraction and treatment system, including groundwater, surface water, and treatment plant monitoring, will continue to remain in operation as specified by the ROD.

## Contacts

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Detailed public files (Administrative Record) on EPA's actions and decisions for this site can be examined at the following locations:

Schlow Memorial Library
100 East Beaver Avenue
State College, PA 16801

U.S. EPA Region III
6th Floor Public Reading Room
1650 Arch Street
Philadelphia, PA 19103-2029
215-814-3157

Please call for an appointment.